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## JUD MS 05 Sumner T. Bernstein Papers Finding Aid

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**SUMNER T. BERNSTEIN PAPERS  
JUD MS 5**

**Total Boxes: 10  
Linear Feet: 5**

**By  
Susannah Clark and  
Meghan Atherton**

**Portland, Maine  
January 2013  
rev. March 2018**

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## **Administrative Information**

Provenance: The Sumner T. Bernstein Papers were created by Sumner T. Bernstein and compiled by Rosalynne Bernstein, who donated the material in 2003, with additional materials donated in 2007.

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Cite as: Sumner T. Bernstein Papers, Judaica Collection, Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity in Maine, University of Southern Maine Libraries.

Restrictions on access: Some materials are restricted until the year 2042.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Sumner Thurman Bernstein (1924 - 2002) grew up in Portland, Maine. His parents were both lawyers. Bernstein served in the South Pacific with the Army of the United States during World War II (achieving the rank of Captain) and attended Harvard University for his undergraduate education and for law school. In 1949, he married Rosalynne Spindel, then a student at Radcliffe College, and returned to Portland to join his father and uncle's law practice, Bernstein and Bernstein. Sumner helped this practice grow and expand into Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson in 1964. Bernstein continued his law practice at this firm for over fifty years, until his final illness in 2002.

Bernstein was very engaged in service to his community in Portland, in addition to his professional engagements. He participated in a range of civic and Jewish community organizations, often serving as president or chair of these groups for a portion of his tenure. The organizations he was involved with include: Portland City Council; Portland School Committee; Portland Housing Authority; Downtown Portland Corporation; Maine State Bar Association; Maine Bar Foundation; Jewish Federation of Southern Maine; Temple Beth El; Maine Jewish Council; Jewish Community Center; National Council of the American-Israel Public Affairs Committee; Pine Tree Council of the Boy Scouts of America; Portland YMCA; Maine Medical Center; Portland Public Library; and World Affairs Council of Maine. Bernstein also served as an adjunct professor at the University of Maine School of Law from 1993-98, was a member of their Board of Visitors, and served as an instructor at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of the University of Southern Maine.

After his death, Bernstein's professional and civic legacy was honored by the creation of a Professorship of Law at the University of Maine School of Law, and the Sumner Bernstein Forum for International Understanding, an annual forum conducted by the World Affairs Council of Maine.

## Description of the Papers

The Papers document Bernstein's civic work and personal life. They include correspondence, newspaper clippings, and text of his speeches and talks. Of particular interest are 25 folders of family correspondence dating from 1940 to 1945, which include letters covering Bernstein's military training and World War II service. Other records and reminiscences of his army service and Harvard education are present, as well. Newspaper clippings extensively document Bernstein's work with the Portland City Council in the late 1950's and early 1960's. The Papers also include materials related to his final illness and death, including letters of sympathy and condolence, information about contributions made in his honor, obituaries, eulogies, and other tributes, and videos/cassettes of memorial services and other celebrations of his life. The Papers include two albums – one documenting the 85-year history of Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer, and Nelson and the other a collection of notes and photos compiled for The Jewish Community Alliance of Southern Maine's Evening to Honor Sumner and Rosalyne Bernstein.

The Papers are organized into four series:

### Series 1. Professional and Community Life

This series is divided into the sub-series of Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson, Speeches and Writings, and Organizational Involvement and Honors. It contains business cards, announcements, and other materials related to Bernstein's law practice, as well as professional correspondence and written speeches and remarks made for a variety of professional and community organizations, including an article for the Portland Press Herald on Public Policy and the Middle East (Folder 12). This series also contains newspaper clippings regarding Bernstein's public service with the City Council and other organizations, and various awards and recognition of service. Sub-series 1.3 is arranged roughly chronologically.

### Series 2. World War II

This series is divided into the sub-series of Correspondence and Documents. It consists predominantly of Bernstein's regular correspondence with family members during his service in the war. It also contains official military correspondence and documentation, a photograph of Bernstein in New Hebrides, and Bernstein's own written reminiscence of his time in service.

### Series 3. Personal

This series contains materials related to Bernstein's education, family and general correspondence, and personal business documents. This series also contains correspondence with friends and colleagues during Bernstein's final illness.

### Series 4. Posthumous

This series contains an obituary written by Bernstein's wife (Rosalyne), and other obituaries and eulogies by family and colleagues. Folder 71 contains a guest book from Bernstein's funeral home. Folder 72 contains an audio recording of Bernstein's funeral. This series also contains official memorials from the Maine State Legislature and the Portland City Council, as well as several memorial publications. Folders 81-92 contain cards and letters expressing condolence and detailing memorial contributions made in honor of Bernstein.

#### Series 5. Restricted

This series consists of materials restricted from public access to guard the privacy of individuals. Listed within their regular series, they are included here to give their physical location. Materials include lists of organization members with addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses; correspondence with email addresses; and personal and contact information of extended family members.

#### Series 6. Addendum

This series contains one letter, which is part of the World War I Correspondence in Series 2. The other materials in the addendum are part of Sumner Bernstein's personal papers listed in Series 3.

Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
<b>Series 1.1 Professional and Community Life. Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson (1949-2002, undated)</b>			
1	1	Business Card and Announcements, Bernstein and Bernstein/ Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson	1949, 1985, 1996, undated
1	2	Professional Correspondence	1950-1951
1	3	Remarks for Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson Some materials are RESTRICTED	1975, 1996, 2000
1	4	Summary Report, The Maine Commission on Legal Needs	1990
1	5	Report, Non-Adversarial Forum Committee	1996
1	6	Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson, The First 75 Years 1915-1990	1990, 2002
1	7	VHS, Interview with attorneys Lancaster, Bernstein and Putnam on Changes in the Law Profession	1999
1	8	Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson Family Album 1915-2000	[2002]
<b>Series 1.2 Professional and Community Life. Speeches and Writings (1950-2001, undated)</b>			
1	9	Speeches and Writings 1950 - 1965	1950-1965
1	10	Comments Regarding Public Service	1950-1957, undated
2	11	Comments Regarding Jewish Community/ Temple Beth El	1951, 1982, 2001, undated
2	12	Portland Press Herald Guest Column on Public Policy and the Middle East	1996
<b>Series 1.3 Professional and Community Life. Organizational Involvement and Honors (1944-2002, undated)</b>			
2	13	Public Service Correspondence	1950-1961
2	14-15	Portland City Council	1955-1963
2	16	Campaign for New Portland Public Library	1978
2	17	Maine State Bar Association Some materials are RESTRICTED	1959, 1976-2001, undated

Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
<b>Series 1.3 Professional and Community Life. Organizational Involvement and Honors (cont'd)</b>			
2	18	National Conference of Bar Examiners	1984-1987, 1994
2	19	Savings Banks of Maine	1964, 1977
2	20	Casco Northern Bank	1965, 1984
2	21	Bowdoin College Family Association	1975-1976
2	22	Estate Planning Courses	1962, 1963, 2002, undated
2	23	Jewish Community and Leadership on Israel Some materials are RESTRICTED	1944-2001
2	24	Volunteerism and Community Recognition Awards	1996-2001, undated
2	25	Newspaper Clippings	1945-1961, 2001
2	26	Program, "An Evening to Honor Sumner and Rosalyne Bernstein"	2000
9		Album of Donations from "An Evening to Honor Sumner and Rosalyne Bernstein"	2000
9		Photos, "An Evening to Honor Sumner and Rosalyne Bernstein"	2000
3	27	Junior Achievement Maine Business Hall of Fame	2002
3	28	VHS, Junior Achievement Maine Business Hall of Fame	2002
<b>Series 2.1 World War II. Correspondence (1941-1951, undated)</b>			
3-4	29-52	World War II Correspondence	1941-1951, undated
11	128	World War II Correspondence See Addendum	1946 Jun 11-12
4	53	World War II Correspondence Envelopes (Empty)	1945
<b>Series 2.2 World War II. Documents (1943-1951, undated)</b>			
4	54	Military Documentation and Official Correspondence	1943-1951, undated
4	55	Photo of Sumner in New Hebrides	1945
4	56	Sumner's World War II Reminiscence	undated
<b>Series 3 Personal (1936-2002, undated)</b>			
4	57	Harvard University and Early Education Documents	1936, 1940-1948
4	58	Family Correspondence	1940
4	59-60	General Correspondence	1944-1951
4	61	Correspondence with Grandchildren Some materials are RESTRICTED	2001-2002

Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
<b>Series 3 Personal (cont'd)</b>			
5	62	Correspondence During Final Illness	2002
5	63	Power of Attorney Document	1943
5	64	Tax Return	1949
5	65	Safe Deposit Box Inventory	undated
5	66	VHS, WCSH News Clip on Maine Ballot Initiative for "Death With Dignity Act"	2000
5	67	Tatersallers Discussion Group Some materials are RESTRICTED	2001
<b>Series 3 Personal See Addendum</b>			
11	98	"Birdbrain," a story by S.T. Bernstein for his grandsons	undated
11	99	An untitled story by S.T. Bernstein for his grandson Nicholas	undated
11	100	"An Alphabet for Matthew"	undated
11	101	"Greetings HH and Norm Baby..."	undated
11	102	"A special alphabet" for Rachel	undated
11	103	"A special alphabet" for Zachary	undated
11	104	"To my dear grandchildren, Nicholas, Rachel, Zachary, and Matthew..."	undated
11	105	Memorandum from "Mr. Whisper" to Rachel, Zachary, and Matthew	1995 Dec 04
11	106	Letter from Nicholas	1995 Nov 22
11	107	"Dear Beth and Michael, Karla and Andy..."	1988 Jan 29
11	108	"Dear Beth, Michael, and Andy..."	1975 Feb 13
11	109	Note and two poems by Nicholas from Kinkaid Literary Magazine	2000 Jun 26
11	110	Two stories by Matthew	undated
11	111	"The Siege of Catland," a story by Zachary [3 copies]	1996 Sep 12
11	112	"My Interview with my Grandparents," by Rachel	undated
11	113	A letter to "Mr. Whisper" from "Mr. Gemmy"	undated
11	114	A letter to "Mr. Whisper" from Rachel	1995 Dec 04
11	115	Correspondence with Rabbi Liebman [2 copies]	1940 Apr 08 - 1940 Apr 26
11	116	Correspondence from S.T. Bernstein's mother	1968 Apr 04 - 1976 May 03
11	117	Papers pertaining to Israel Bernstein, S.T. Bernstein's father	1953 May 09 - 1977 May 10
11	118	Letter from Betsy Abrams	1999 Jun 18



Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
11	119	Description of various University of Maine School of Law scholarships	undated
11	120	American Jewish Tercentenary article, parts I - IV	195[?] March 18 - 195[?] Apr 22
11	121	List of doctors and hospitals	undated
11	122	Correspondence with Sandra A. Hartford regarding article about Bernstein's mother, Rachel	1996 Jul 15 - Aug 28
11	123	Letter from Bob Nelson	undated
11	124	Letter from Harold E. Woodsum, Jr.	2002 May 23
11	125	Acknowledgment of \$250 Gift	2002 Apr 23
11	126	Letter from Nick and Jay	undated
11	129	Letter from Elihu Berman to Israel Bernstein	1948 Aug 17
11	130	Two stories and one letter from Israel Bernstein	1932 Jul 20 - 1947 Dec
11	131	Two letters, from Congressman Robert Hale and Mrs. Agnes Hale	1946 Mar 01
11	132	Letter from and response to Peter L. Murray	1993 Feb 11 - 1993 Feb 15
11	133	Card from "Tuffy"	undated
11	134	Plaque, "A cluttered desk is a sign of genius."	undated

#### **Series 4 Posthumous (2001-2007)**

5	68	Obituary written by Rosalyne; Resume	2001, 2002
5	69	Obituary Clippings	2002
5	70	Eulogies	2002
5	71	Funeral Home Visitor's Book in Memory of Sumner	2002
5	72	Audiocassette, Recording of Sumner Bernstein Funeral	2002
5	73	Memorial Service, Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson	2002
6	74	VHS, Memorial Service at Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson (and copy of Junior Achievement Maine Business Hall of Fame 2002)	2002
10		Maine State Legislature Memorium of Sumner	2002

Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
<b>Series 4 Posthumous (cont'd)</b>			
10		Portland City Council Declaration of Sumner Bernstein Day	2002
6	75	University of New England Recognition Award	2002
6	76	Memorial Publications	2002
6	77	Tapes, Interview with Sumner Bernstein for Maine Bar Journal 2002 August Issue	2001
10		Portraits of Sumner and Rosalyne for Maine Bar Journal	2001
6	78	Book, <i>Portraits of Courage, Voices of Hope, II: A Photographic Essay of Cancer Survivors</i> (Dedicated to Sumner)	2004
6	79	Sumner T. Bernstein Professorship of Law, University of Maine School of Law	2004
6	80	World Affairs Council of Maine, Sumner Bernstein Forum for International Understanding	2003-2007
6-8	81-92	Memorial Contributions and Letters of Condolence	2002
<b>Series 5 Restricted</b>			
FC	93	Items Removed from Remarks for Bernstein, Shur, Sawyer and Nelson (Series 1.1, Folder 3)	1975, 1996, 2000
FC	94	Items Removed from The Maine State Bar Association (Series 1.3, Folder 17)	1959, 1976-2001, undated
FC	95	Items Removed from Jewish Community and Leadership on Israel (Series 1.3, Folder 23)	1944-2001
FC	96	Items Removed from Correspondence With Grandchildren (Series 3, Folder 61)	2001-2002
FC	97	Items Removed from Tatersallers Discussion Group (Series 3, Folder 67)	2001
<b>Series 6 Addendum</b>			
11	98	"Birdbrain," a story by S.T. Bernstein for his grandsons	undated
11	99	An untitled story by S.T. Bernstein for his grandson Nicholas	undated
11	100	"An Alphabet for Matthew"	undated
11	101	"Greetings HH and Norm Baby..."	Undated

Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
<b>Series 6 Addendum (cont'd)</b>			
11	102	"A special alphabet" for Rachel	undated
11	103	"A special alphabet" for Zachary	undated
11	104	"To my dear grandchildren, Nicholas, Rachel, Zachary, and Matthew..."	undated
11	105	Memorandum from "Mr. Whisper" to Rachel, Zachary, and Matthew	1995 Dec 04
11	106	Letter from Nicholas	1995 Nov 22
11	107	"Dear Beth and Michael, Karla and Andy..."	1988 Jan 29
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11	110	Two stories by Matthew	undated
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11	123	Letter from Bob Nelson	undated
11	124	Letter from Harold E. Woodsum, Jr.	2002 May 23

11	125	Acknowledgment of \$250 Gift	2002 Apr 23
11	126	Letter from Nick and Jay	undated
11	127	Printed photo of Riverton School Volunteer S.T. Bernstein	2001
11	128	Letters from S.T. Bernstein to "Dear Ones"	1946 Jun 11 -12

Box	Folder	Title	Date(s)
<b>Series 6 Addendum (cont'd)</b>			
11	129	Letter from Elihu Berman to Israel Bernstein	1948 Aug 17
11	130	Two stories and one letter from Israel Bernstein	1932 Jul 20 - 1947 Dec
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